



Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji

The Pioneer of freedom & non co-operation movement



NAMDHARIS

The Freedom Fighter

Information & Public Relations Deptt., Punjab



SRI SATGURU RAM SINGH JI

The Namdhari Sikhs known as Kukas in the political annals of India are rightly called "Torch bearer of India's freedom struggle."

Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji, the master planner of freedom movement in India founded Namdhari sect on 12th April 1857 at Sri Bhaini Sahib (Distt. Ludhiana, Punjab). At that time, India was under the yoke of British Empire. Simultaneously, the people were depressed under the evil customs of the society.

Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji mobilized the people for the freedom of the country as well as against the evil customs of the society. He inculcated religious awareness among the people because it evokes the feeling of self-respect and sacrifices for the sake of the country. In a short period, lacs of people flocked to him and they became fully aware of their serfdom and of bondage.



(Dowryless, inter-caste marriage system introduced by Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji)

SOCIAL REFORMS

In the 19th century, killing girl-child in infancy and her sale-purchase was a daily occurrence in India. The main cause behind these pernicious customs was the enormous burden of marriage expenses and illiteracy. Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji laid emphasis on the education of both boys and girls. He introduced a new expense-less system of marriage which is called "Anand Kaaraj". The dowry, marriage procession and various other formalities associated with wedlock were stopped. The first ever intercaste mass marriages were performed on 3rd June, 1863 in village Khote distt. Moga, Punjab.

Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji made every effort to give respect and equal status to women in the society.

S. Kapoor Singh I.C.S. writes in his book 'Sapat Sring',

"If we set aside all good deeds of Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji on one side which he preached for the goodness of whole mankind and the country, only his

preaching for equal rights for men and women in the society take him to the list of supreme reformers of the world".

The preaching of Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji changed the mind set of people.

"When first heard of as a successor of Balak Ram (Guru Balak Singh) of Hazro, he was known as Ram Singh Mahant, afterward as Guru Ram Singh, then as Satguru Ram Singh and now as Satguru Badshah".

[Lt. Gen. Meck Andrew-DIG, Ambala Circle]

Mr. J.W. Mecnab, Commissioner Ambala had mentioned in his report dt. 4.11.71 "I see in earlier papers that Ram Singh was looked upon as a successor or actual re-embodiment of Guru Nanak (Dev Ji) the saint. He is now the representative of Guru Gobind (Singh Ji) the warrior".

Actually, "The objects of Ram Singh and his disciples were not merely religious but that under the guise of a religious reforms and teaching of moral precepts, he harboured deep political design."

[Mohammed Latif-History of Punjab]



NON CO-OPERATION & SWADESHI MOVEMENT

Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji was the pioneer and first in the world history who used Non-co-operation as a weapon to free his country from the yokes of British empire. It was much earlier than Mahatma Gandhi Ji talked of it.

Dr. Rajinder Parsad, the first President of India, wrote in 1935 in his article in "Satyug".

"Guru Ram Singh believed in the political freedom as part of religion. The organisation of the Namdhari became considerably strong. The movement of Boycott and Non-co-operation which Mahatma Gandhi started so vigorously in our times was preached by Guru Ram Singh 50 years ago as cult for the Namdharies. Guru Ram Singh's Non-co-operation movement contained the following five essentials :-

1. *Boycott of Government service.*
2. *Boycott of educational institution opened by British.*
3. *Boycott of law-courts started by the British.*

4. Boycott of foreign made goods.
5. Refused to obey and resist the laws & orders which own's conscience abhors.

"(Guru) Ram Singh the sikh philosopher and reformer and the first Indian to use non co-operation and boycott of British merchandise and services as a potential weapon. (Encyclopedia of Britanica - Vol.8, Page 142)

It was evident that Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji had established an independent parallel government. He set up his own postal system. Diplomatic relations were established with native states & neighbouring countries such as Nepal, Afghanistan & Russia etc. In 1869-70 a separate regiment "KOOKA PLATOON" was created in Kashmir state.

SACRIFICES

To consolidate their power, the Britishers had adopted the policy of dividing the population on religion and communal basis. They issued the orders

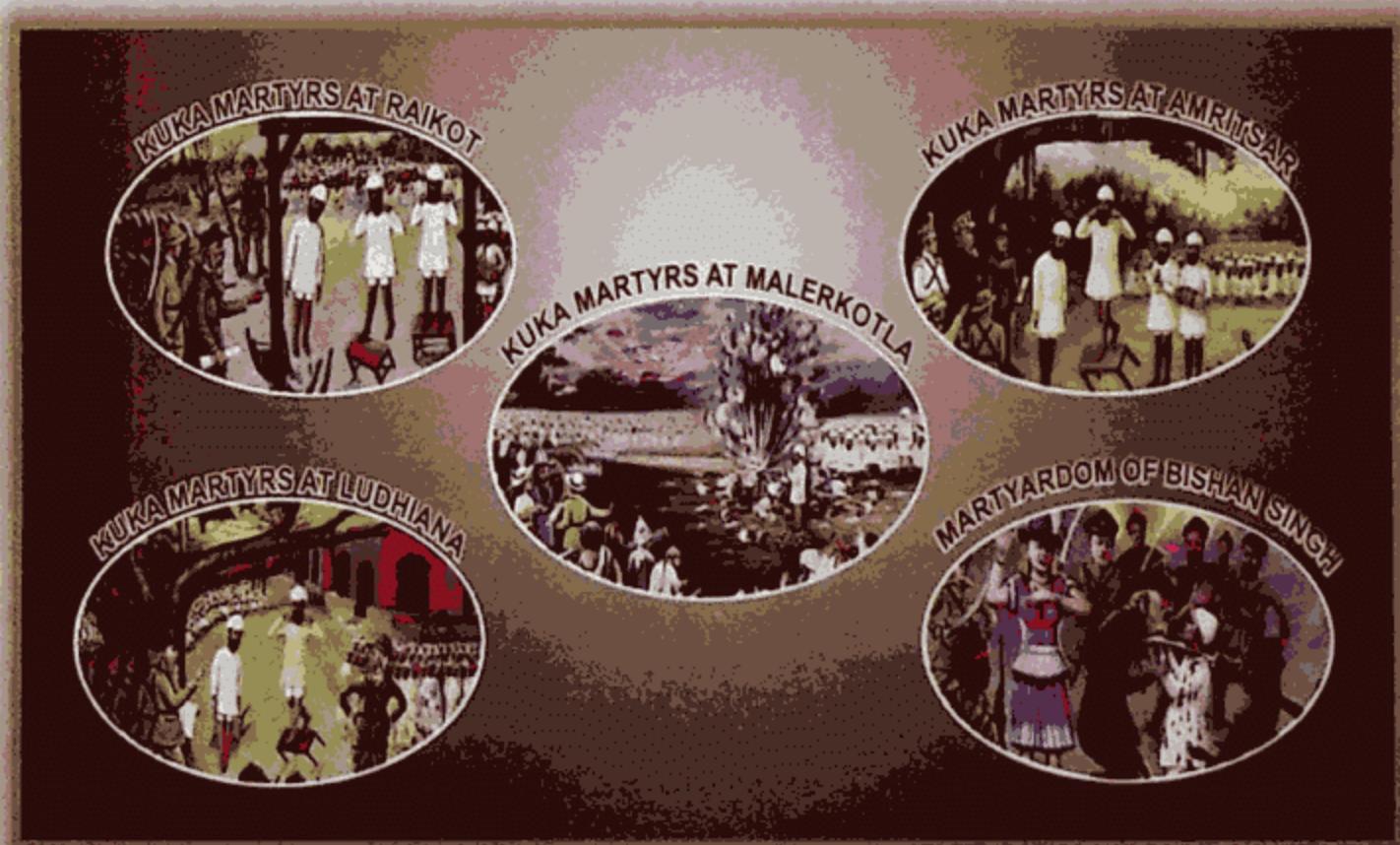
"No one should be allowed to interfere with the practice by his neighbour and of customs which that neighbour's religion either enjoins or permits".

Then Muslims were encouraged to practice cow killing. This was totally against the religious tenets and sentiments of Hindus and Sikhs. Namdhari Sikhs understood the policy of British Government.

Namdharis revolted against British empire and raided the slaughter houses at Amritsar on 15th June, 1871 and then Raikot on 15th July, 1871. The British government reacted quickly. But they were unable to arrest the real persons who had attacked the slaughter houses.

As per British govt. document No. 1060, dated 10/09/1871, "No evidence was available in the case, till on the order of the (Guru) Ram Singh, the real culprits (Namdhari) presented themselves before the judge".

Three Namdharis were hanged on 5th August 1871 at Raikot, four at Amritsar on 15th September 1871 and two at Ludhiana on 26th November, 1871.



(Kuka Martyrs of freedom movement of India)

KUKA MASSACRE AT MALEKOTLA

Under the leadership of S. Hira Singh and S. Lehna Singh, Namdhari Sikhs attacked Malerkotla on 15th January, 1872. There was a fierce fighting. The Kukas fought bravely, persons from both the sides were killed. S. Hira Singh lost his left arm in this battle. In the evening, this group of Namdharis went to village Rarh. S. Hira Singh addressed the group,

"We had achieved our target. We had conveyed our feelings to the British government that now the Indians had woken up. They would neither tolerate foreign rule nor hurt to their religious sentiments and self respect".

Then all of them resolved to surrender before the British authority. At that time the ruler of Malerkotla State was a minor. Mr. Cowen D. C. Ludhiana was working as a Superintendent of the Council of Administration. He immediately sent the force to bring all the arrested Namdhari revolutionaries to Malerkotla parade ground. He had got nine cannons from neighbouring Indian states. He had made up his mind to blow all the rebel Namdharis with cannons who had attacked Malerkotla. It was evening of 17th Jan. 1871, when the brave Namdharis reached the parade ground of Malerkotla. Now a days, this ground is known as "Kukian da Shaheedi Rakkar".

Mr. Cowen conducted no trial. He immediately ordered to tie the rebel Namdharis to the cannon's mouth. But the Namdharis refused saying "They would come to the cannons mouth themselves turn by turn". Once again Mr. Cowen proposed them to stand with their backs to the cannons. But again the Kukas replied that only the cowards die a death by receiving the shots on the backs. They would die a brave death getting the shots in their chests. Before ordering to shoot, Mr. Cowen questioned group leader S. Hira Singh, 'Why they had attacked Malerkotla?'. S. Hira Singh replied very firmly and boldly,

"We want rule of our own brothers.....your justice is lie. Your death and downfall is near.....We shall be born again, hold the sword in our hands and wage a war which will destroy your rule."

Then seven cannons were set to fire and seven were blown. Seven times the seven cannons were set to fire and all the times seven Namdharis i.e. 49 in total sacrificed their lives for the independence of India. A young boy of twelve, Bishan Singh was asked by Mr. & Mrs. Cowen to renounce Guru Ram Singh Ji and Namdhарism to save his life. As soon as Bishan Singh heard these words which insulted his master, his eyes became balls of fire. Like a lion, with a leap, he pounced on Mr. Cowen and caught hold of his beard and pulled it so hard that Mr. Cowen's life was put in danger.

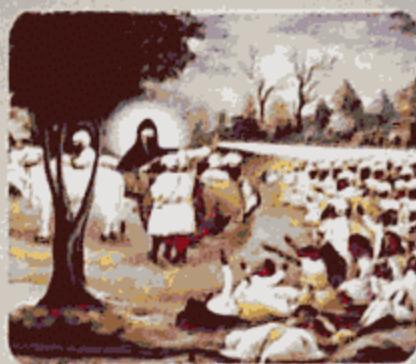
Mr. Cowen wrote about this incident as,

"One man escaped from the guards and made a furious attack on me, seizing me by the beard and endeavoring to strangle me and as he was a very powerful man. I had a considerable difficulty in releasing myself".

Mr. Cowen was saved by native officers who cut the hands & head of Bishan Singh with their swords. Next day, on 18th January, 16 more Namdharis were blown off with the cannons. On this day, S. Waryam Singh was rather short. He was asked to go back as he fallen short of cannon range. As a matter of fact, he was related to the Maharaja of Patiala, so Warayam Singh was asked to go back. Warayam Singh ran at once, brought some pebbles and sods from the nearby fields and prepared a small platform. Standing upon it, he challenged the gunman to fire as his height was now in match with the level of cannon's mouth.



Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji at Ludhiana Railway Station He was deported to Allahabad by special train 4.00 am on 18th January 1872



Sri Satguru Ram Singh along with prominent Subas and personal attendant S. Nanu Singh arrested from Sri Bhaini Sahib on the midnight of 17th January 1872



Sri Sarguru Ram Singh at Kolkatta port on 11th March 1872. He was exiled to Yangoon-Myanmar



Police post at the entrance of Gurudwara Sri Bhaini Sahib between January 1872 to May 1923 (for 51 years)



Namdhari Sikhs facing atrocities in British Jails



For the freedom of India, Namdhari Sikhs were drowned in the sea water by British Govt. in 19th Century

Exiled for freedom and atrocities by British rulers

Mr. Henry Cotton writes in his book "Indian and home memories",

"These reminiscences of 1872, would be incomplete without some reference to what can I only describe as the massacre of Malerkotla for my part I can recall nothing during my service in India more revolting and shocking than these execution".

Actually, it was the only inhuman and illegal action of its kind in the history.

'The friend of India', on 1st February 1872, strongly protested and wrote, "We protest, without waiting for official documents, against the wholesale military execution ordered by Mr. Deputy Commissioner Cowen".

NAMDHARI SIKHS ARE SEDITIONISTS

The British government was waiting since a long time for an appropriate opportunity to crush the Kuka sect. The government took this occasion of Malerkotla as affording an opportunity for exercising its absolute power for crushing the Namdhari movement. Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji and prominent Subas were arrested and exiled.



Fort of Aden (Yemen)



Hazari Bagh Jail (Jharkhand)



Fort of Bishnupur-Punjab (Punjab)



Central Jail of Yangon (Myanmar)



Fort of Multan (Pakistan)



Fort of Allahabad : Sri Satguru Ram Singh along with prominor Subas (Namdhari Preachers) kept in 1872



Fort of Lahore (Pakistan)



Cellular Jail of Andaman (Kalgan)



Fort of Asangaon (Maharashtra)



Fort of Chunar (U.P.)



Central Jail of Insein (Myanmar)

British jails where Namdhari Sikhs suffered atrocities of British Rulers

The residence of Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji, now called Gurudwara Sri Bhaini Sahib, (Distt. Ludhiana, Punjab) was raided by the police. A strong police post was stationed at the main gate of Gurudwara Sri Bhaini Sahib, which remained for 51 years (1872-1923). The Namdharies were ordered not to hold meetings and leave place of their residence without informing the police or village head. More than five Namdhari Sikhs could not assemble at a place. The whole Namdhari community was treated like seditious. Hundreds of Namdhari Sikhs were sent to jails or deported to Andemann Island and their properties were seized. But Namdharies were undaunted by rigorous imprisoned life and the prosecution of police. They continuously fought for the freedom of India under the benign & inspiring guidance of Satguru Hari Singh Ji & Satguru Partap Singh Ji.

"The truth is that it is not possible for a kuka to be loyal subject of the British Government," (In "Ludhiana District Gazetteer-1904)

In the mean time, the Indian National Congress had been organised. The Namdhari Sikhs joined hands with the Congress. They organised a number of conferences at various places in Punjab to arouse the people against the British tyrrany. In 1925, the Congress started a special campaign from Bradella Hall in Lahore. The Namdharies participated in this movement fully, stood at the forefront and faced arrests. In Dec. 1929, Annual Session of Congress was organised in Lahore. The Namdhari Sikhs had not only taken part in the session but also provided free food to every participant.

The Daily Tribune Lahore published a news on 27.12.1929,

"Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru was riding a horse. It was a beautiful white charger. Behind him were the G.O.C. and other officers of the volunteers corps. The most striking feature was the Sikh cavalry dressed in white spotless khadi and wearing stylish turbans. The Namdharies with their flowing beards were presenting a thrilling sight."

At State people Conference on 17th Feb. 1939 in Ludhiana, a large procession was organised in protest of British rule in India. Pt. Nehru was heading this procession. It were Namdharies whose number was impressing the procession.

When Netaji Subash Chandra Bose organised the AZAD HIND FAUJ with its centre in Bangkok (Thailand), The Namdharies of Thailand helped him all the way. Subash Chandra Bose said that,

"The banner for freedom given to Indians by Satguru Ram Singh and the sacrifices done by Namdhari Sikhs will be a matter of great pride for the Indians. The Namdhari Sikhs, experienced for three quarters of century for their peaceful non-co-operation movement, are expected to carry forward the banner of freedom in the forefront and will encourage sacrifices. Guru Ram Singh is the first leader of peaceful non-co-operation movement in India."

In 1945, Vavel Conference was held in Shimla. All the patriots and political parties participated in this conference. Sri Satguru Partap Singh Ji also reached Shimla with Namdhari Sikhs. Pt. Nehru asked Sri Satguru Ji, 'What do you want? What are your dreams ?' Sri Satguru Partap Singh replied, "My want, wish and demand is only India's freedom".

On account of these pioneering efforts & sacrifices of the Namdharies and all other patriotic forces, India attained independence on 15th August, 1947.

Pt. Nehru had written in an article published in Satjug in 1935.

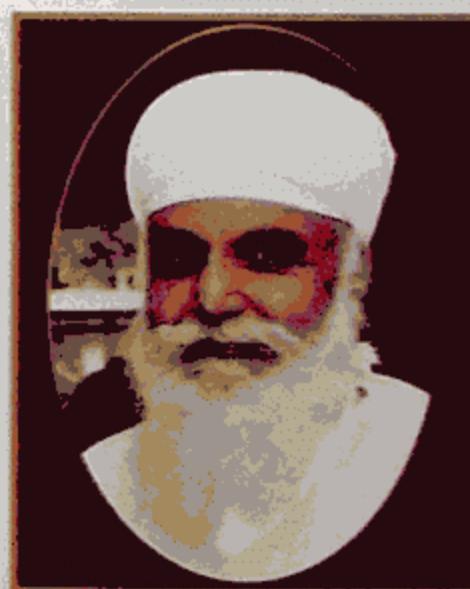
"No Indian can deny the importance of efforts put in by Satguru Ram Singh and his followers Namdhari Sikhs seventy five years ago in achieving freedom of the country. Congress merely followed the path shown by them and attained Independence."

After independence of India, Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji inculcated religious awareness and evoke the patriotic feelings to work for the unity and integrity of the country, love and affection towards down-trodden, peace and prosperity of the mankind all over the world.

Now, Sri Satguru Uday Singh Ji is preaching & practicing the teachings and tenets of great Satgurus for the benefits of the whole mankind.



Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji



Sri Satguru Uday Singh Ji